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ACTION ARA-01

CARACA 10323 282128Z

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	AID-01	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00	DS-00
	EB-01	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	IO-19	LAB-04
	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01
	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10	SIL-01	SNP-01	SP-01
	SR-01	SS-00	STR-18	TRSE-00	T-01	ASDS-01	/099W

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P 282128Z SEP 92
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4237
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
USIA WASHDC 8787

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E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PHUM, PGOV, VE
SUBJECT: GRENADE THROWN AT RESIDENCE OF
FORMER PRESIDENT LUSINCHI

REF: (A) CARACAS 10202, (B) CARACAS 9888,
(C) SAN JOSE 8027

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 2:00 AM ON SUNDAY, SEPT. 27, AN
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EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WAS THROWN FROM A PASSING VEHICLE AT
THE CARACAS RESIDENCE OF FORMER VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT
JAIME LUSINCHI (ONE PRESS ACCOUNT DESCRIBED THE DEVICE
AS A FRAGMENTATION GRENADE, ALTHOUGH AUTHORITIES ARE
STILL ANALYZING THE REMNANTS). NO ONE WAS INJURED AND
DAMAGE TO THE GRILL SURROUNDING THE HOUSE (AS WELL AS
A CAR PARKED IN THE DRIVEWAY) WAS LIGHT. THE HOME
BELONGS TO LUSINCHI'S WIFE, BLANCA IBANEZ. BOTH
LUSINCHI AND IBANEZ ARE IN SAN JOSE, WHERE THE COSTA
RICAN GOVERNMENT RECENTLY GRANTED POLITICAL ASYLUM TO
HER (SHE WAS BEING INVESTIGATED FOR INFLUENCE PEDDLING

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AND THE MISUSE OF STATE FUNDS -- SEE REFS B-C AND PREVIOUS).

2. THE EXPLOSION COMES SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON LABOR LEADER AND CONGRESSMAN ANTONIO RIOS WHO FACING TRIAL (AND HAD EARLIER BEEN BRIEFLY DETAINED) ON CORRUPTION CHARGES. THE GROUP APPARENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RIOS ATTACK, THE BOLIVARIAN LIBERATION FORCE (FBL), CLAIMED THAT IT WOULD TAKE ACTION AGAINST "CORRUPTOS" AND SAID IT HAD A LIST OF 127 TARGETS. BLANCA IBANEZ' NAME HAS APPEARED IN THE PRESS AS ONE OF THE NAMES ON THE FBL LIST. SO FAR, NEITHER THE FBL OR ANY OTHER GROUP HAS TAKEN CREDIT FOR THE ATTACK ON THE LUSINCHI/IBANEZ HOME.

3. CARACAS PRESS STATES THAT LUSINCHI RELEASED A STATEMENT FROM COSTA RICA IN WHICH HE ASSERTED THAT THE EXPLOSION "FORMED PART OF A CRIMINAL, DESTABILIZING PLOT THAT IS UNDERWAY, THE CLEAR RESULT OF THE SERMON OF HATE TO WHICH THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBJECTED."

4. EVEN BEFORE THE SEPT. 27 INCIDENT, THE GOV HAD ANNOUNCED THAT IN RESPONSE TO THE RIOS ATTACK AND THE DANGER OF FURTHER VIOLENCE IT WAS REASSIGNING SOME 600 POLICEMEN BACK TO PROTECTIVE DETAILS FOR PROMINENT POLITICIANS AND OTHERS (THEY HAD RECENTLY BEEN PULLED OFF SUCH DETAILS, IN A POPULAR MOVE TO BOOST THE NUMBER OF POLICE ON THE STREETS FIGHTING ORDINARY CRIME).

5. COMMENT: THE ATTACK ON THE LUSINCHI PROPERTY LOOKS LIKE A "COPY-CAT" RESPONSE TO THE ASSAULT ON RIOS, BY INDIVIDUALS STRIKING OUT AT ANOTHER PROMINENT "CORRUPTO." BUT THESE ATTACKERS WERE PROBABLY LOOKING TO MAKE A STATEMENT RATHER THAN PHYSICALLY INJURE LUSINCHI AND IBANEZ. THE SMALL SIZE OF THE EXPLOSIVE, THE FACT THAT THE HOUSE IS PROTECTED FROM THE STREET BY A WALL, AND THE FAIRLY WELL KNOWN FACT THAT LUSINCHI WAS IN COSTA RICA WITH HIS WIFE MAKE IT UNLIKELY THAT THIS WAS AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT.

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